CHAPTER 7: TROUBLES

THAT I AM THE TRUE DATE MASAMUNE...
SHOW YOU PROOF...

IF I WERE A BODY DOUBLE, I WOULD NATURALLY IMITIATE THOSE FLAWLESSLY.
WELL, EVEN IF I SHOWED OFF THIS BLIND EYE, OR SOME OF MY MORE WELL-KNOWN HABITS,

DATE MASA-MUNE.
UNFORTUNATELY, I CAN'T SHOW YOU ANY OTHER PROOF I AM THE REAL

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OR NOT?
WILL YOU FINE GENTLEMEN GATHERED HERE GO ALONG WITH MY PLAN?
OR NOT?
AM I REAL?

IT'S A TRUE GAMBLE.
OR NOT?
WOULD IT SUCCEED?
AND IF YOU DID GO ALONG WITH IT,

WHICH ONE WILL BE THE END OF YOU?
LIFE IS ALWAYS A SERIES OF GAMBLES.

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AND THAT IS WHAT MAKES LIFE SO INTER-ESTING!

WELL, THEN, MY FINE GENTLEMEN GATHERED HERE!
THIS TIME
JUST WHICH WILL YOU BET ON, I WONDER?
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WHY DO I HAVE TO STAY HERE!?
BUT,
KAGARI, HYOSUKE AND I WILL TAIL ANY TARGES WHO COME OUT AND FIND THEIR INN!
THE TARGETS SHOULD ALL BE AT THAT TEMPLE, BUT THERE COULD BE SOMEONE RETURNING TO THEIR INN.

JUST DO IT!
GET SOME GOOD SLEEP AND WAIT!
LOOK, WHEN WE FINISH THEM OFF, WE'LL BE COUNTING ON YOU!

EH?
IT'S A LONG WALK, AND IT MIGHT ALL BE FOR NOTHING ANYWAYS. AND SINCE YOU WERE TOO WORRIED ABOUT HATSUNE, YOU DIDN'T SLEEP A WINK, DID YOU?

TOBI-ZARU IS RIGHT!
FINE! I'LL SLEEP!

THE FIRST TO LEAVE THE TEMPLE WHERE THE FORMER CHIEF RETAINER KOBORI SHIGEMASA AND THE SHINOBI KUROKAWA GENGO.

KAGARI, FEELING IT HIS RESPONSIBILITY TO DISCOVER HATSUNE'S WHEREABOUTS, FOLLOWED THEM.

HOWEVER, THEY WERE SO ALERT AND EAGER TO FIGHT, THAT HIS PRESENCE WAS DETECTED BY THEM.

SINCE IT WAS A VERY DARK NIGHT WITH NO MOON OR STARS OUT,
I'M SO SO-RRY.
SO HIS ATTEMPT TO TAIL THEM FAILED... AND HE ONCE AGAIN RETURNED TO THE INN WITH NO WORD ON HATSUNE.
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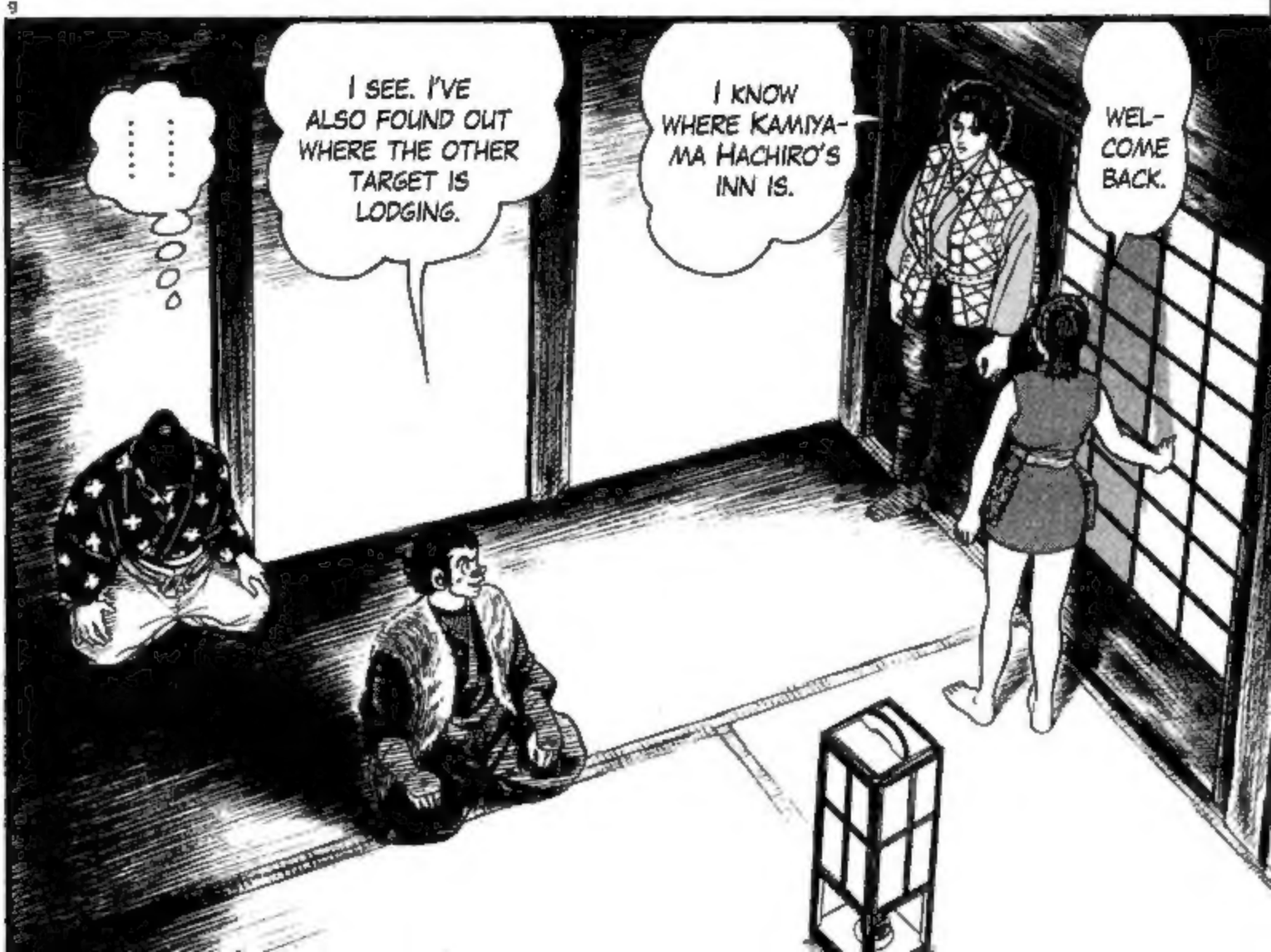
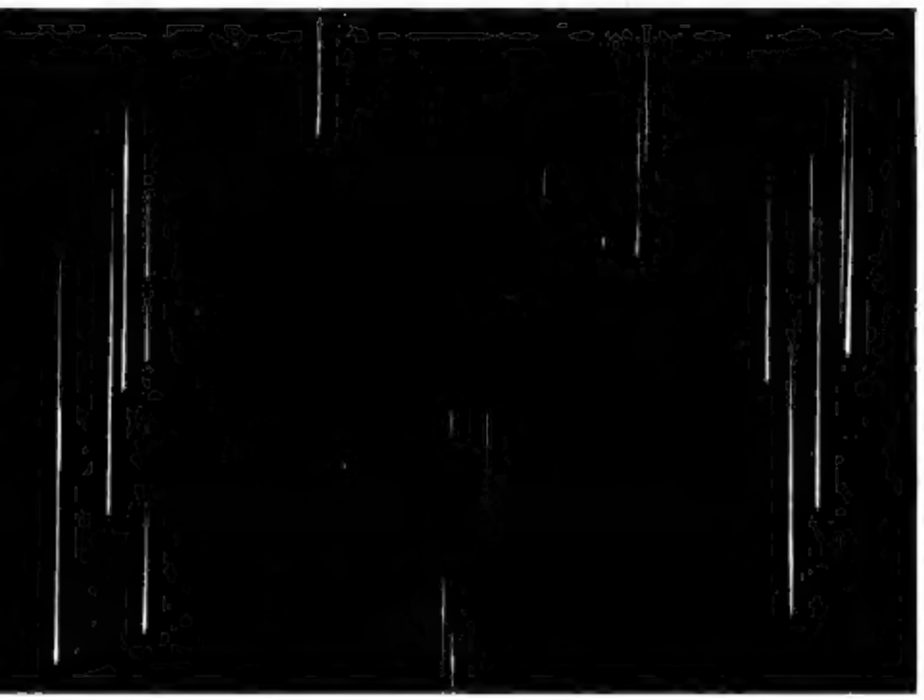
TOBIZARU RELIED ON HIS NOSE TO TAIL THE NEXT TARGET.

WHILE HYOSUKE FOCUSED ON THE NEXT TARGET TO EMERGE.


.....
I SEE. I'VE ALSO FOUND OUT WHERE THE OTHER TARGET IS LODGING.
I KNOW WHERE KAMIYA-MA HACHIRO'S INN IS.
WEL-COME BACK.

THEN I'LL DEAL WITH KAMIYAMA HACHIRO.

I'LL KILL THE ONE THAT I FOLLOWED!
TONIGHT'S PITCH BLACK. LET'S ATTACK AT DAWN!



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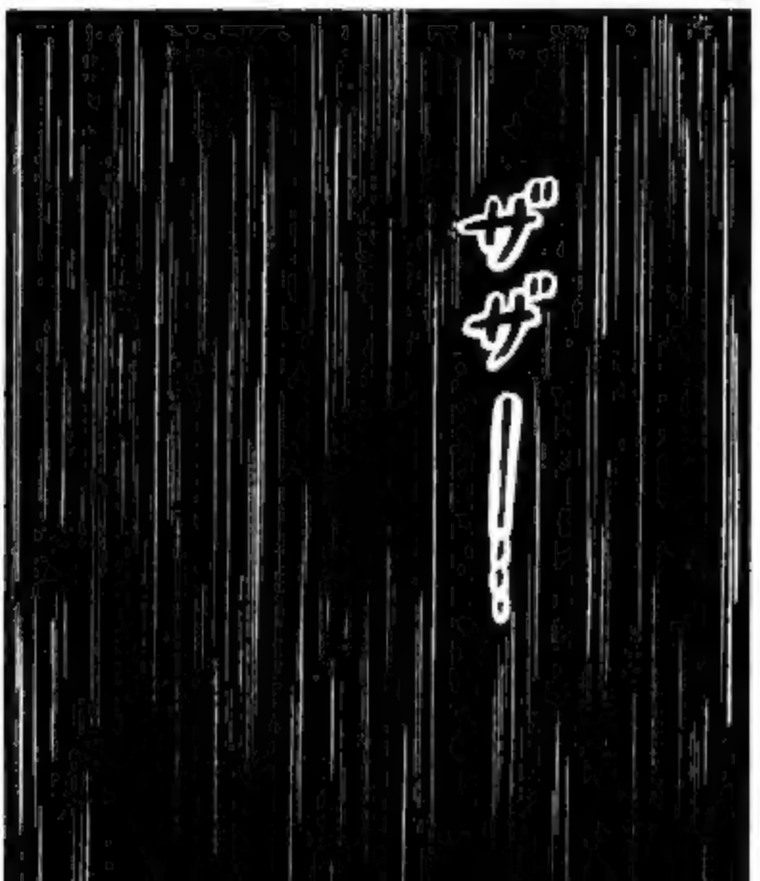
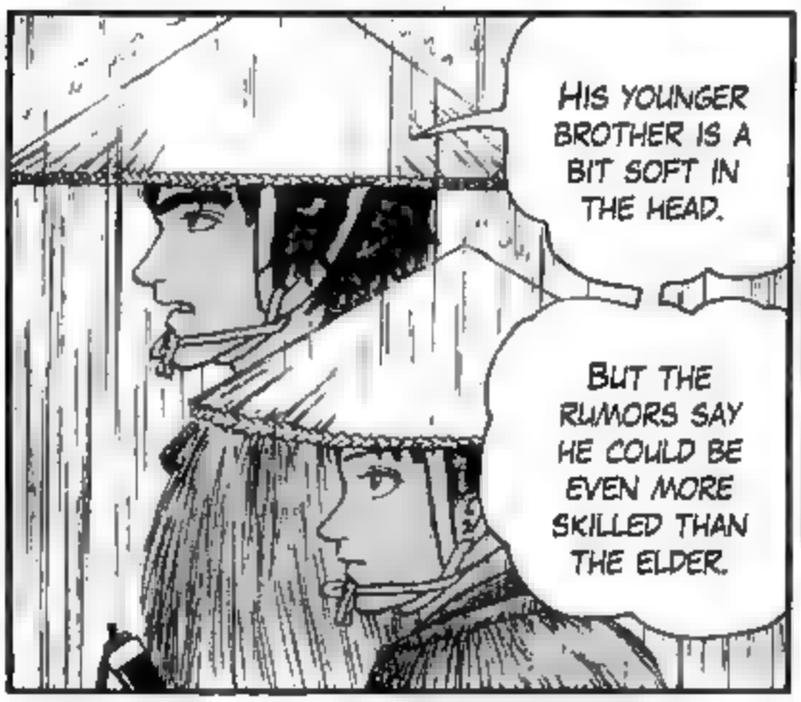


THERE!? IS THAT EVEN AN INN!?.
EVEN IF YOU CAN BARELY CALL IT ONE.
YES.


HIS YOUNGER BROTHER IS A BIT SOFT IN THE HEAD.
BUT THE RUMORS SAY HE COULD BE EVEN MORE SKILLED THAN THE ELDER.

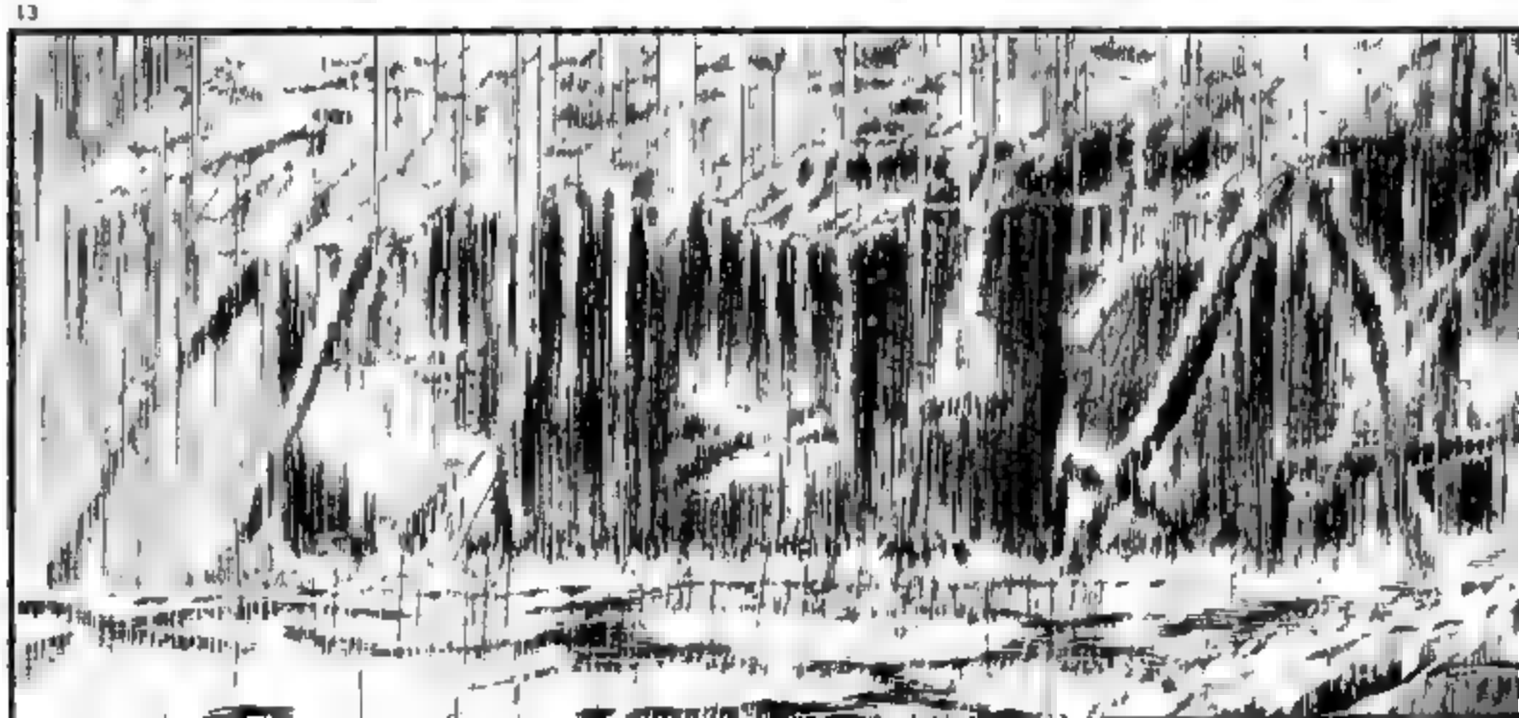
KAMIYAMA HACHIRO HAS A YOUNGER BROTHER NAMED INO WHO'S ALWAYS AROUND HIM.
LAST NIGHT, HE EVEN WENT BACK BECAUSE HE DIDN'T WANT TO MAKE HIS YOUNGER BROTHER WAIT.

I WISH IT WERE JUST LIKE YOU SAY...
KAMIYAMA HACHIRO IS THE SOLE TARGET.

FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN...THAT YOUNGER BROTHER IS ABNORMALLY "FOND" OF HIS OLDER BROTHER.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
.....
THE OLDER BROTHER, KAMIYAMA HACHIRO, WAS...MORE THAN A FATHER FOR THE YOUNGER ONE, INO.
FOND...?
.....
YOU SHOULD REALLY BE CAREFUL...
SO I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'LL BE ABLE TO RETREAT AFTER YOU KILL ONLY KAMIYAMA HACHIRO OR NOT.
.....

GOT IT. THANK YOU.
.....

I'LL INFORM THE OTHERS TO COME BURY THE REMAINS AND THEN I'LL HEAD TO SEARCH FOR THE NEXT TARGET.
FROM HERE ON, IT'S MY TASK, HYOSUKE-DONO. PLEASE GO BACK.



I CAN'T SLEEP AT ALL! WAKE UUUUUP!
EVEN IF THERE'S A ROOF, IT'S LIKE IT'S NOT EVEN THEEEEEERE!
WAHAHAHA! BIG BROOOO!
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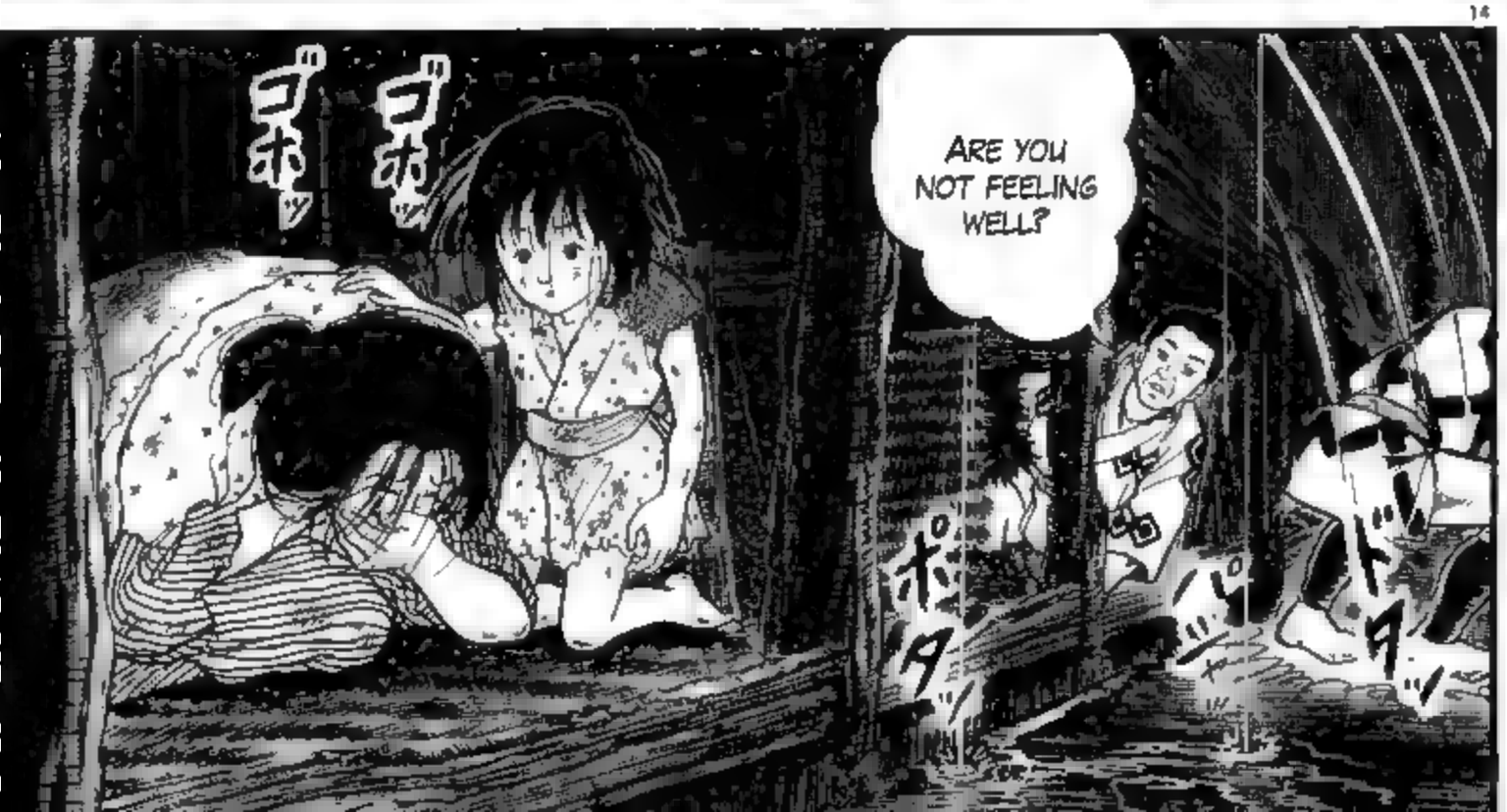
ARE YOU NOT FEELING WELL?
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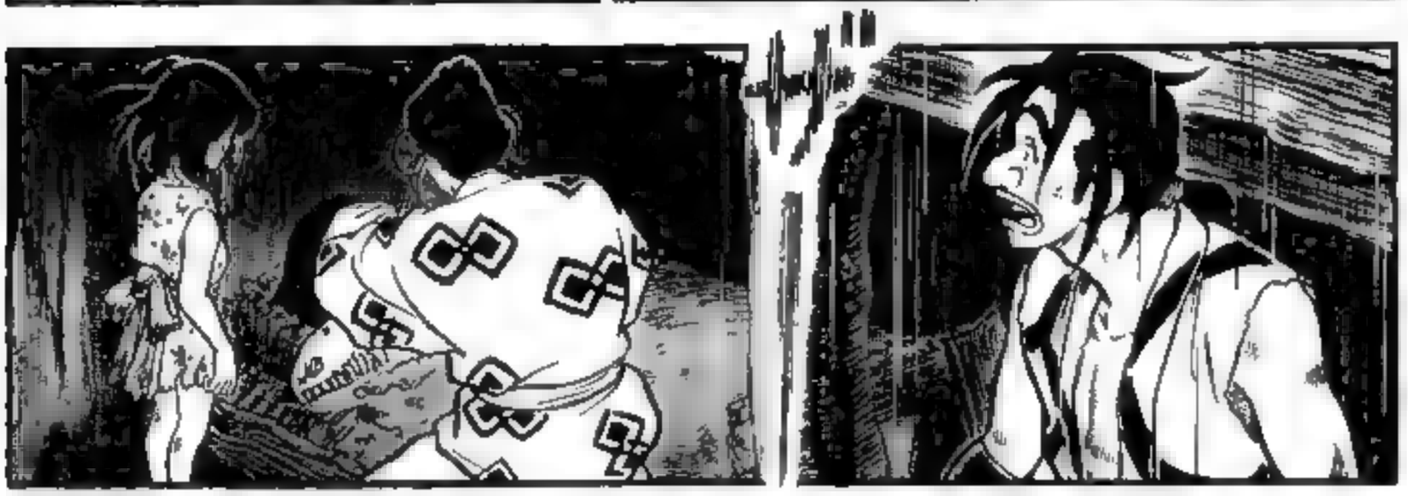

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HE'S GOT A FEVER.

DON'T YOU FRET. WITH ENOUGH REST, YOUR MOTHER WILL BE WELL IN NO TIME.
I HAVE SOME GOOD MEDICINE WITH ME.
DON'T WORRY. IT'S LIKELY JUST FATIGUE FROM THE JOURNEY.

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SO TAKE YOUR TIME AND REST.
YOU CAN'T TRAVEL IN THE RAIN,
THANK YOU SO MUCH!
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HAHA HAHA!
FORTUNATELY, THIS SPOT SEEMS TO HAVE NO LEAKS...
THANK YOU!
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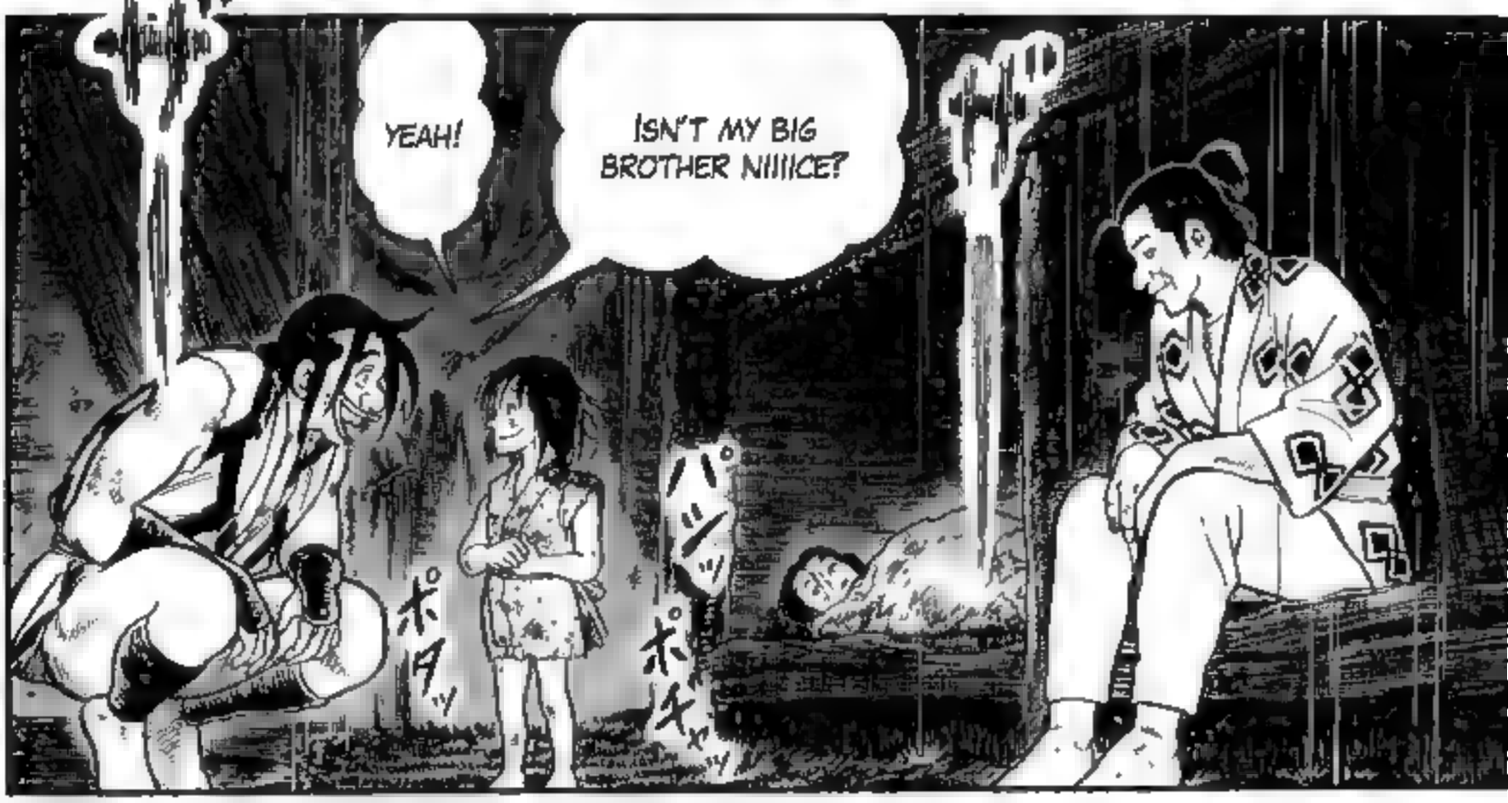
YEAH!
ISN'T MY BIG BROTHER NIIIICE?
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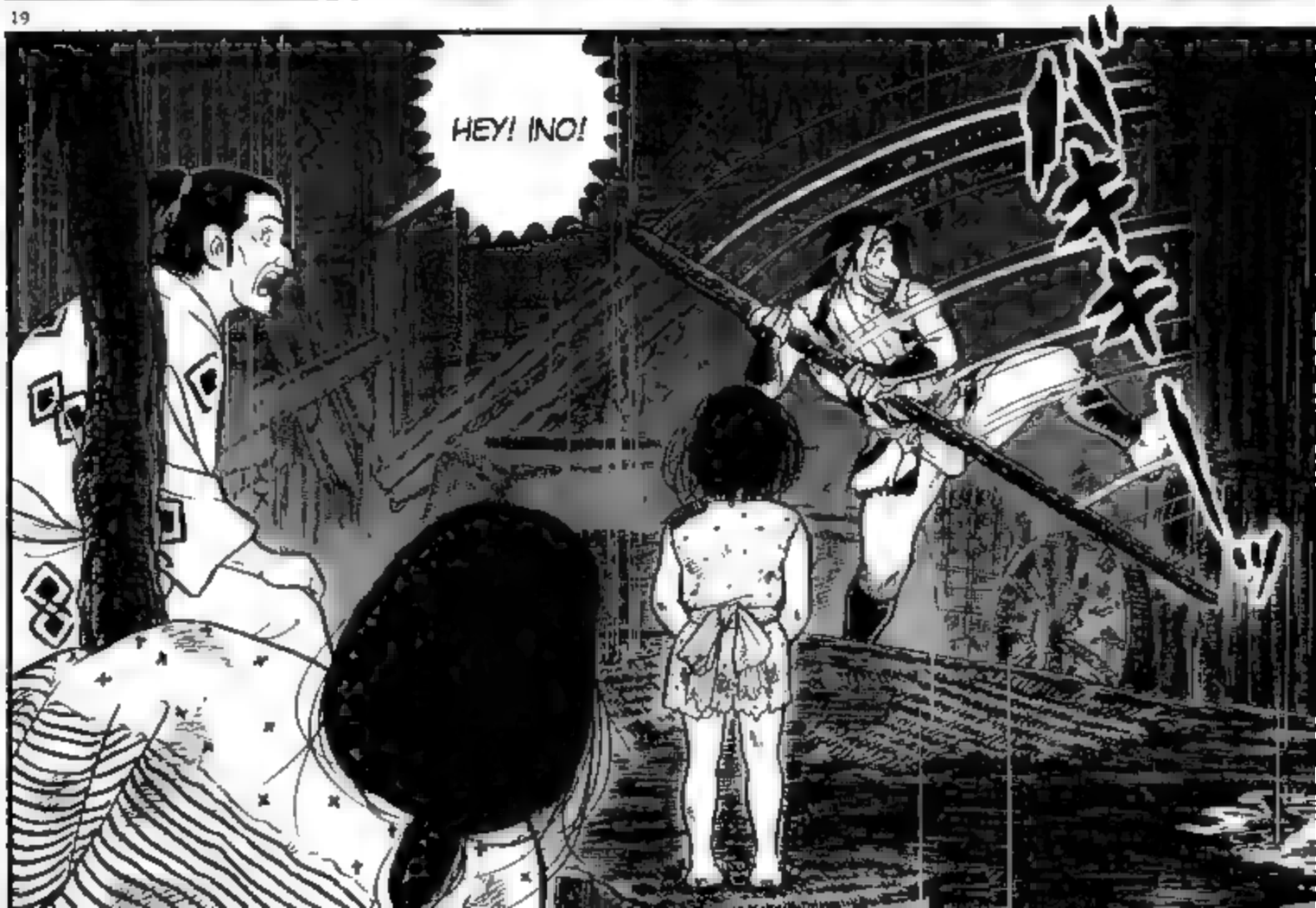
ポチャッ

HE'S ALSO STROOONG!
ISN'T ONLY NICE AND KIND!
BIG BRO

WE WERE WOKEN UP BY THE ROOF LEAKS, AFTER ALL!
IT'S STILL DAWN.
YES.
BIG BRO, NOT TIME TO GO OUT YET, RIGHT!?
OOOOH! WELL THEN! WHAT SHOULD WE PLAY!? WHAT SHOULD WE DO!? I WONDER, I WONDER!
YES!
WELL...SHOULD WE PLAY SOMETHING!?
THE "SWISH SWISH!"
AHHHH! BIG BRO! MAKE THAT!

WHAT'S A SWISH-SWISH?
NOW, BIG BROTHER WILL MAKE ONE FOR YOU!! HE'S REALLY GOOD AT MAKING THE "SWISHSWISH"!!
AND MADE FOR ME A LONG TIME AGO!
A REAL NICE TOY MY BRO CAME UP WITH


HEY! INO!

IT CAN'T BE HELPED...
PERFECT, HUH?
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バシャッ
カカカ

WHAT? WHAT'S HE MAKING?
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LISTEN! IS THIS ALL FALLS DOWN, IT'S NO GOOD!
UHHH...
RIGHT!

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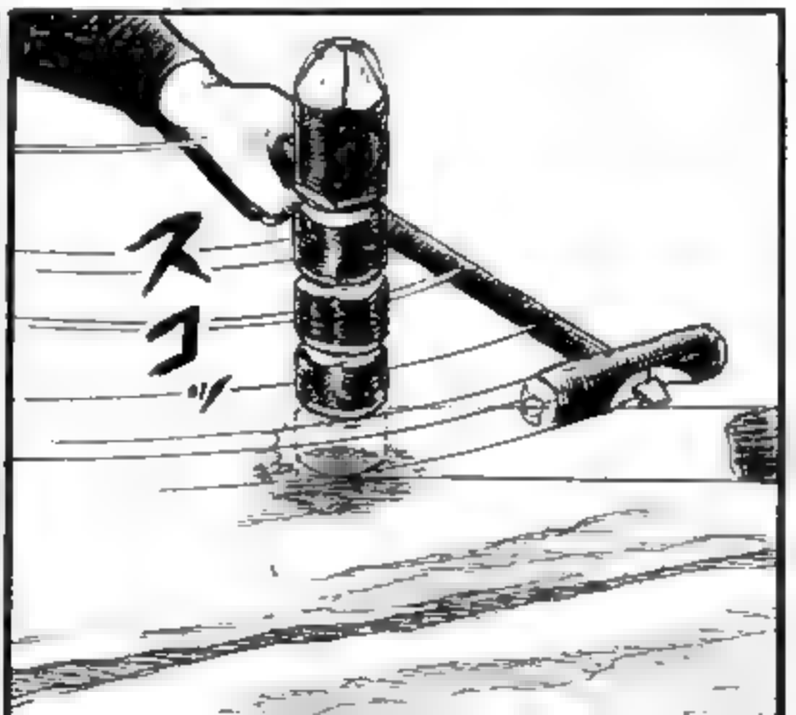
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WAAA AAAH!?
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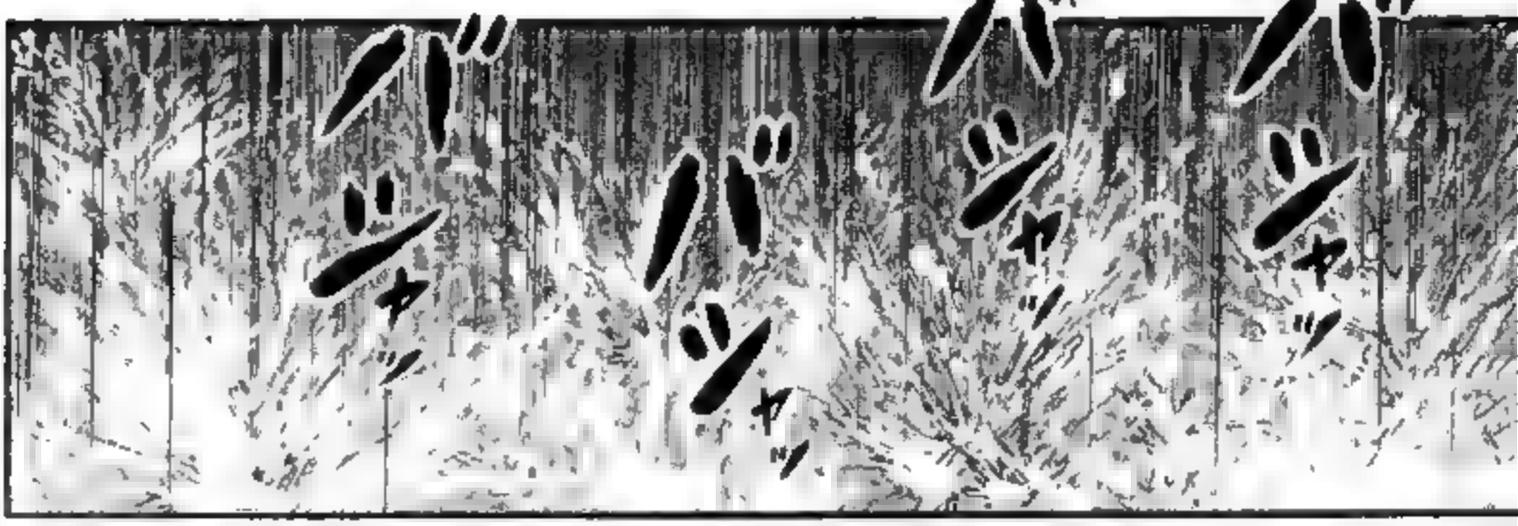
WAHAHAH! YOUR TURN!
AMAZING! BUT HOW!?
IT DIDN'T FALL DOWN!
HIT IT HERE WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH!

TRY AS MUCH AS YOU WANT!
I'M SURE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO IT RIGHT SOON.
YOU WERE CLOSE!

AHHH! IT FELL!



JUST A BIT MORE!
CLOSE!
AH!
HAHA!

!!
HUH!?

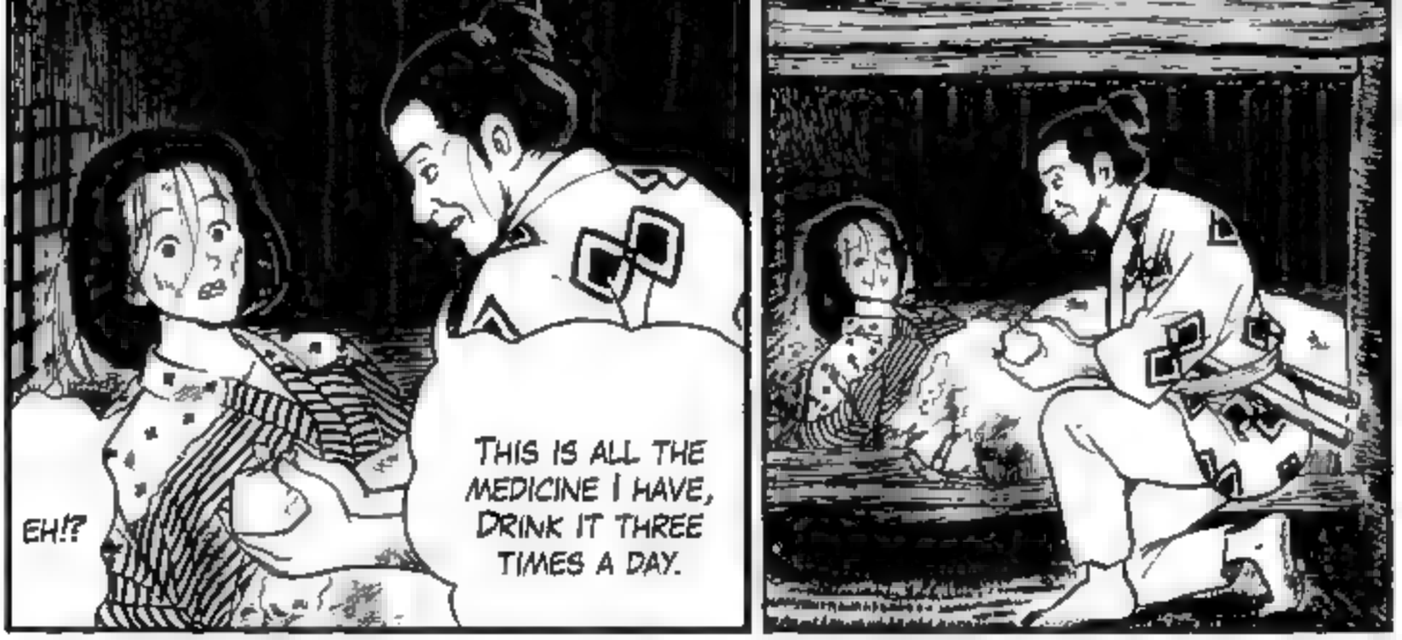
KAMIYAMA HACHIRO-DONO. MY NAME IS AZUMI AND I HAVE COME TO FULFILL MY MISSION.
PLEASE. I WISH TO FIGHT YOU AT A DIFF-ERENT PLACE.

AZUMI.
SO YOU'RE THE ONE CALLED AZUMI.
I'VE HEARD OF YOU.
WHAAAAT!? WHO IS THIS GIRL!?

I AGREE!
.....

PLEASE. LEAVE THIS PLACE AND FACE ME.

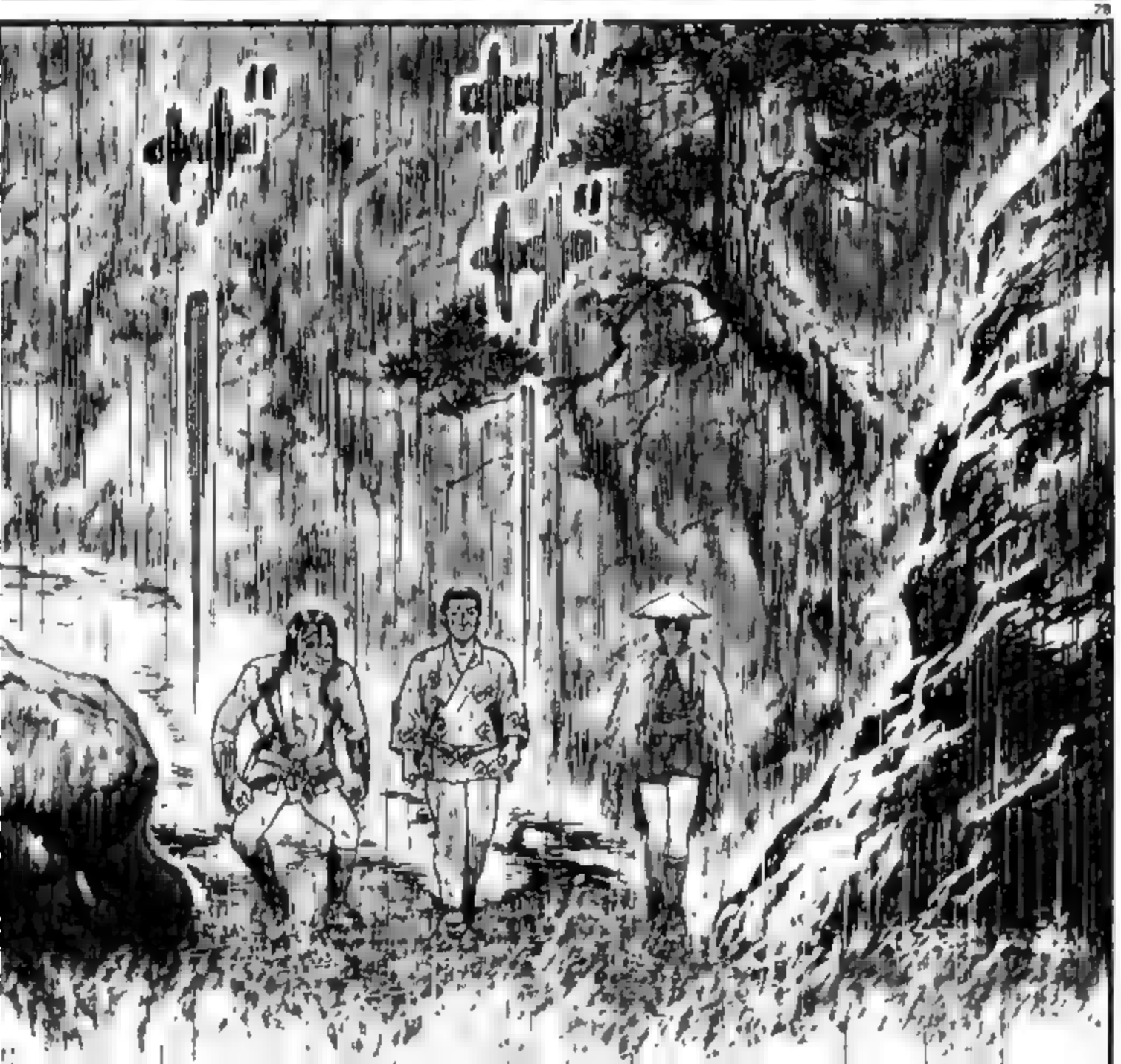
INO, WE'RE GOING OUT! MAKE YOUR PREPARATIONS!
UM!
UHH!?
WHO'S THAT GIRL!?
DO YOU KNOW HER!?

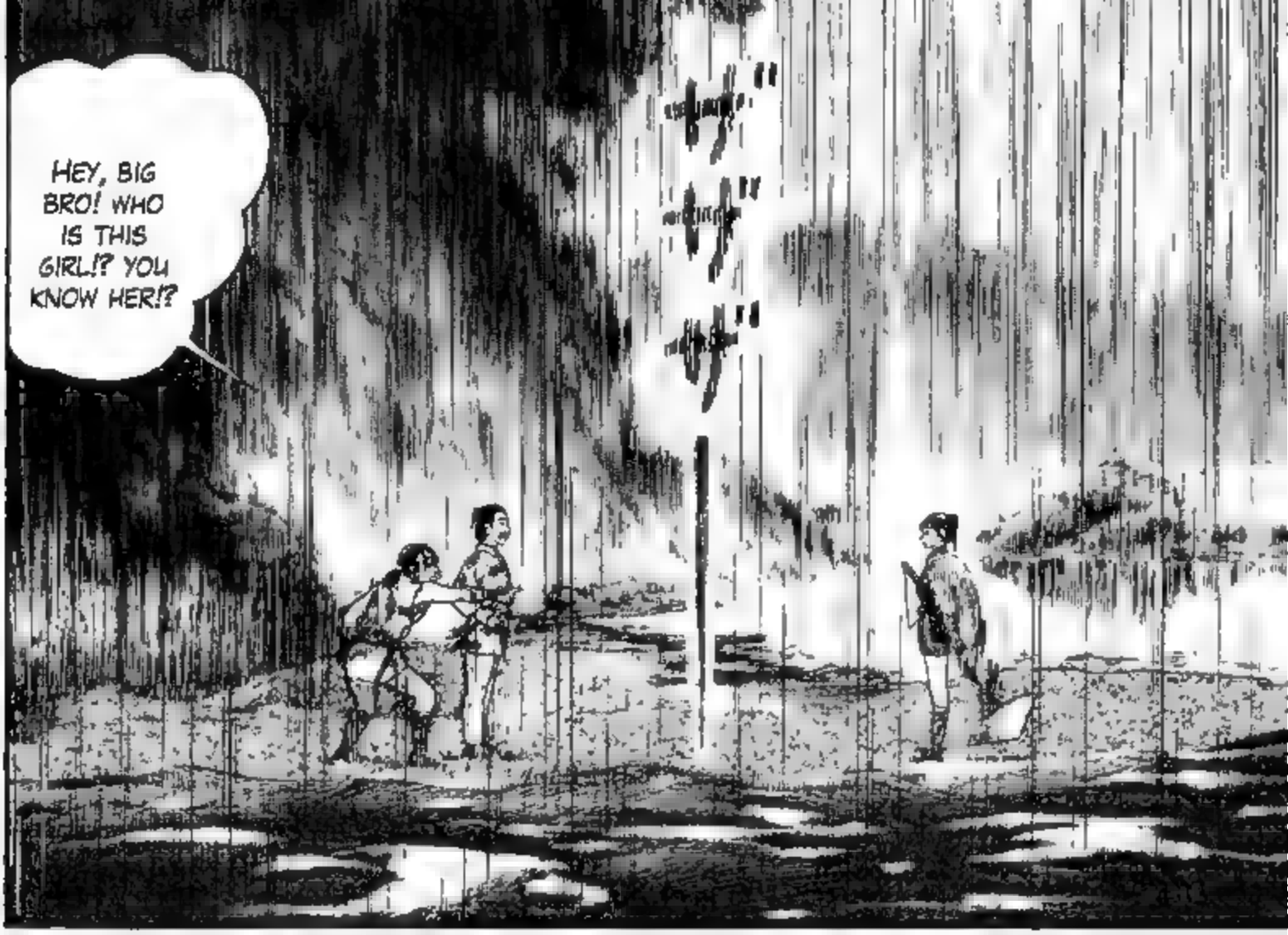

EH!?
THIS IS ALL THE MEDICINE I HAVE, DRINK IT THREE TIMES A DAY.

BIG BRO! WHERE'RE WE GOING!?
OF COURSE.
I-IS IT ALRIGHT FOR ME TO ACCEPT SUCH A THING?
ANYWAYS, REST FOR TODAY. YOU'LL SOON FEEL BETTER. I HAVE NO DOUBT.

YEAH!
UHO!! WE'LL BE BACK SOON, SO YOU TRAIN AND WAIT!! YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO IT! I KNOW IT!
OH, SOME-WHERE NEARBY.

I HAVE NO NEED FOR SUCH A THING.
WHAT ABOUT YOUR COAT?
YEP!
COME BACK QUICK, OKAY!




HEY, BIG BRO! WHO IS THIS GIRL!? YOU KNOW HER!?

SHE'S A SHOGUNATE ASSASSIN WHO'S COME TO KILL US. EVEN THOUGH SHE'S A YOUNG GIRL, THEY SAY THAT SHE'S VERY SKILLED.

HUOO OOOO OOOO OOOO OOOO !!!!
OOO OOO OOO OOO OOO OOO OO!!
OHHH!

YOU JUST STAY BACK AND WATCH.
BIG BRO! LEAVE HER TO ME!!!!

THAT'LL BE SOOO COOOL!
YOU'RE GONNA SHOW HER JUST HOW STRONG YOU REEEEALLY ARE!?!

BUT NOW YOU CAN SEE FOR YOUR-SELF!
IT'S A REAL SHAME YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW TOUGH MY BIG BRO IS!
LI'L ASSA-ASSIN!
AH! BUT!
YOU'LL BE DEAD THE MOMENT YOU REALIZE IT!

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〈掲載・ビッグコミックスペリオール平成13年16号より22号まで〉

「あずみ」　第24集―完―

あずみ 24

—葛藤—

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